

A Threat to Louisiana Rice – Action Needed

An important message from

The Louisiana Rice Grower's Association and
The Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Rice Advisory Committee

Louisiana rice growers, land owners, and stakeholders have received notices informing them that they are automatically a participant in a class action lawsuit against the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the state's rice research and promotion boards. This lawsuit could threaten the very future of our rice industry, and don't let anyone tell you anything different. **If you want Louisiana to continue to be a world leader in rice production and innovation, you need to opt out of the lawsuit today.** Instructions about how to do this are below, as is a more detailed explanation of why it is the right thing to do.

At a time when American agriculture faces so many challenges outside of our control: regulations, trade wars, rising interest rates and production costs, and weather to name a few, it is unconscionable that we would sue ourselves – dividing our communities, wasting valuable and limited resources, and jeopardizing the very future of our industry.

If successful, this lawsuit could severely impact the research and promotion boards – rejecting the unprecedented advancements the boards have already brought us, while endangering Louisiana's share of rice markets here and around the world and imperiling the LSU AgCenter. Since their inception in 1972, the Louisiana Rice Research and Promotion Boards have strived to advance the interests and innovations of our industry. Comprised completely of volunteers, these boards work tirelessly, year-round for the good of Louisiana rice farmers, with no compensation for their time and efforts.

Today, we can look back with pride on the successes and massive accomplishments of those boards. Since the 1980's, Louisiana rice farmers have more than doubled their statewide production and doubled statewide average per acre yields. These yield increases have occurred without compromising the quality of Louisiana rice, considered a worldwide standard.

The LSU Ag Center and the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station has led, and continues to lead, the entire world in rice breeding and variety development. The innovations of new varieties in the early 2000's have provided a revolutionary solution to red rice, which benefited not only Louisiana farmers, but the entire U.S. rice industry. Recent research has led to an extension of that technology so future generations of rice growers can control red and weedy rice problems, ensuring the viability of rice production in areas where crop rotation is nearly impossible.

We now efficiently control virtually all rice diseases and pests with relative ease, while leaving a thriving crawfish industry unharmed from pesticide use, thanks to the brilliant research and science funded by you and your fellow growers and directed by the boards now being sued.

Louisiana rice is recognized around the world as a healthy and delicious staple of the American diet. In less than 20 years, we have increased average household consumption of rice by nearly 90%, and the promotion board played a pivotal role in developing the “Grown in the USA” label, which is proudly displayed on the majority of domestic packaged rice and even used in foreign markets.

By working with industry partners like USA Rice, every Louisiana rice promotion dollar is magnified 24 times and put to work here in the US, along with two dozen countries around the world. This has not only expanded existing markets, but has been successful in opening new ones.

The Louisiana rice industry led the charge with allies in Congress, at USDA, and at the Department of State to apply pressure on Iraq to purchase U.S. rice that has resulted in the sale of 120,000 metric tons (MT) of milled rice in 2017, 120,000 MT in 2018, and 180,000 MT thus far in 2019. Our boards were crucial in the negotiation of the free trade agreement with Colombia, which took that country from our 51st ranked market to our 7th, and has poured more than \$9 million back into Louisiana for rice research since 2012.

These are but a few examples of how the farmer’s investment in the Louisiana Rice Research and Promotion Boards have not only kept our industry viable, but pointed us towards an extremely bright future; even in uncertain times for American agriculture. None of these accomplishments would be possible without your contributions as producers through the state check-off program, but now it is all jeopardized by the potential consequences of this lawsuit. Please consider removing yourself from this effort.

Since the inception of the check-off refund option in 2014, only a fraction of growers have requested their check-off be refunded, totaling around 6% of all check-off funds received. This means more than 90% of rice stakeholders recognize the value the research and promotion boards bring for the Louisiana rice farmer. We urge you to continue in this solidarity of support (including all parties with a shared risk in your operation such as water and landlords), as it is the only way to insure these boards continue to provide a promising future for all of Louisiana’s rice industry. Please join us in showing your support for our industry by **opting out today!**

The Board of Directors,



The Rice Advisory Committee,



Attached is a form letter that addresses the opt-out requirements as specified by the class notice. You may be required to send an opt-out letter such as this for each person/entity.

Please send your opt out letter to Rice Class Counsel by August 26, 2019

Rice Class Opt Out

P.O. Box 2007

Chanhassen, MN 55317-2007

I wish to be excluded from the Class in Krielow, et al. v. Louisiana Dept. of
Agriculture and Forestry, et al.

Name/Entity Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Social Security #(Last 4 Digits)

and/or Employer ID #: _____

Phone #: _____

Signature: _____

and Title if Signing as an Entity Representative: _____

Date Signed: _____